

*Croton-on-Hudson, NY* – Congressman John Hall (NY-19), having voted for the just-passed James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act in the House of Representatives, met today with (Retired) Detective Charlie Wassil of the Peekskill (NY) Police Department, a gravely ill Ground Zero first responder, to discuss provisions of the new legislation and how they will benefit him and thousands of others.

The meeting between Congressman Hall and Detective Wassil, who has become partially paralyzed due to a lung ailment caused by his exposure to toxins at Ground Zero, took place at Bethel Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, where Detective Wassil is now being treated for his illness.

“I voted to pass the Zadroga 9/11 bill with the sincere hope that it can quickly make a difference and improve the lives of Detective Wassil and so many others who selflessly responded to the terrorist attacks in New York City nine years ago,” said Congressman Hall. “The work of the first responders and clean-up crews at Ground Zero proved, once again, that the people of our great nation always pull together in times of crisis. Now, it’s our turn to pull for the individuals who sacrificed their health to work at ground Zero.”

Thousands of first responders and others were exposed to toxins of Ground Zero and are now ill as a result. These include firefighters, rescue workers, responders, police officers and EMTs, construction workers, cleanup workers, residents, area workers and school children, among others. Their illnesses include a range of respiratory, gastrointestinal, and mental health conditions.

Named after James Zadroga, a police officer who died as a result of contracting respiratory diseases from Ground Zero, the bill provides medical monitoring to the heroes of the attack. In its entirety, The Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act will ultimately provide a more permanent form of medical treatment for first responders in order to ensure that these Americans will be respectfully and adequately taken care of. The bill also would reopen the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund to those whose illnesses developed after the fund was closed in 2003, and provide for research into 9/11-triggered health conditions.

Detective Wassil is one of thousands of people who will be medically monitored when the bill is signed into law.

“I am truly grateful to Representative Hall and his colleagues in Congress who are making the care of the 9/11 first responders a real priority,” said Detective Wassil. “The future well-being of so many of us who worked down at Ground Zero is at stake because of the dust and debris we were exposed to, and it’s important that we receive proper care before it’s too late.”

Last month, a number of Detective Wassil’s family members and friends held a fundraiser for him in Peekskill to help pay for his medical costs.